



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

The Tuesday Performance Classes are made possible through a generous gift from Dianne W. Henderson.

Voice Studies at the University of Toronto presents

Songs of Requiem and Light: "Order out of Chaos"
Students from the Third-Year Oratorio Class Perform

November 14, 2017 at 12:10 pm
Walter Hall

Mia Bach, instructor
Miguel Brito, collaborative class pianist
Tracy Wong, guest conductor

After the students are welcomed into the stage area,
we ask that applause be withheld until the end of our program,
when it will be graciously received. Thank you!

Traditionally, the program "Songs of Requiem and Light" honours Remembrance Day, Nov. 11. Although that day is already past, the regard and respect expressed on that day should have no fixed date. We again wish to dedicate this program to those whose lives have been harshly interrupted by human conflict and to those who continue to serve humanity's struggle for freedom and tolerance.

PROGRAMME

Deines Kinds Gebet erhöere (*Drei geistliche Lieder*, Op.96, no.2) Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809–1847)

Hala Chergui, mezzo-soprano solo

Quartet: Avery Lafrentz, soprano; Alexandra Hetherington, alto;

Tristan Scott, tenor; Alexander Bowie, bass

Tracy Wong, conductor

Virgam virtutis (*Dixit Dominus*)

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Ian Sabourin, countertenor

Selections from *Theodora*

George Frideric Handel

Angels, ever bright and fair

Alexandra Carroll, soprano

With darkness deep

Caroline Stanczyk, soprano

Oh! that I on wings could rise

Heidi Duncan, soprano

Total eclipse! (*Samson*)

George Frideric Handel

Elias Theocharidis, tenor

Selections from *Paulus*

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Vertilge sie, Herr Zebaoth

Matthew Li, bass-baritone

Doch der Herr vergisst der Seinen nicht

Alexandra Hetherington, mezzo-soprano

Gott, sei mir gnädig

Alexander Bowie, baritone

Ihr männer, was macht ihr da?

Lutzen Riedstra, bass-baritone

Wisset ihr nicht

Nicholas Higgs, baritone

Selections from *Psalms 42 (Wie der Hirsch schreit)*, Op. 42

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Meine Seele ... Meine Thränen

Charis Wong, soprano

Denn ich wollte gern hingehen

Sacha Smith, soprano solo

Quartet: Charis Wong, soprano 1; Avery Lafrentz, soprano 2;

Alexandra Hetherington, alto 1; Hala Chergui, alto 2

Tracy Wong, conductor

Selections from *Die Jahreszeiten*

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Dem Druck erlieget die Natur

Tristan Scott, tenor

Aus Lapplands ... Licht und Leben

Avery Lafrentz, soprano

Dignare Domine (*Te Deum*)

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Georgia Perdikoulis, soprano solo

Quintet: Margarete von Vaight, soprano; Hala Chergui, alto;

Elias Theocharidis, tenor; Nicholas Higgs, baritone; Lutzen Riedstra, bass

Tracy Wong, conductor

Requiem aeternam (*Messa da Requiem*)

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Margarete von Vaight, soprano solo

Third Year Oratorio Class: Alexandra Carroll, Georgia Perdikoulis, Heidi Duncan, Charis Wong,

Sacha Smith, Caroline Stanczyk, soprano

Hala Chergui, Avery Lafrentz, Ian Sabourin, Alexandra Hetherington, alto

Tristan Scott, Elias Theocharidis, tenor

Matthew Li, Lutzen Riedstra, Alexander Bowie, Nicholas Higgs, bass

Tracy Wong, conductor

These performances are given in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctorate of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting for Tracy Wong.

PROGRAMME NOTES

The idea of order out of chaos has permeated diverse areas of humanity for centuries. Both words independent of each other have numerous meanings, describing multiple scientific conditions and societal patterns. The dual theme of order and chaos has coexisted throughout history, often controversially, and has applications in the humanities, religion, the arts, sciences, mathematics and philosophy.

Today's program explores and illustrates this theme in the works and characters of oratorios of Handel and Mendelssohn, and the sacred works of Haydn, Dvorak and Verdi. The sacred works mirror the chaos of joy, conflict, acceptance and order of the individual and human societal experience. The inner chaos of characters such as Theodora and St. Paul inspired Handel and Mendelssohn to write music of great turmoil, with subsequent beauty of peace and resolution.

"Human life itself may be almost pure chaos, but the work of the artist is to take these handfuls of confusion and disparate things, things that seem to be irreconcilable, and put them together in a frame to give them some kind of shape and meaning."

*Katherine Anne Porter (1890-1980)
American journalist, essayist, short story writer, and novelist.*

Hala Chergui: This is the chorale "Deines Kinds Gebet Erhöre" from Mendelssohn's song cycle *Drei geistliche Lieder*, also known as three sacred songs. This text is a cry for help from a supernatural power, in this case, God. It represents a calling to his greatness to answer our prayers and restore order in the world, and in ourselves. This creates a hope in finding forgiveness for our sins in order to protect ourselves from those who intend harm.

Deines Kinds Gebet erhöre, Vater,	<i>Hear your child's prayer, Father</i>
schau' auf mich herab;	<i>look down on me</i>
meinen Augen Licht gewähre,	<i>give my eyes light,</i>
rette mich ans dunkelm Grab.	<i>save me from the dark grave.</i>
Sonst verlacht der Feind mich Armen,	<i>Otherwise the enemy will laugh at me, poor one,</i>
triumphirt in stolzer Pracht,	<i>and will triumph in proud splendour,</i>
sonst verfolgt er ohn' Erbarmen	<i>otherwise he will persecute without mercy</i>
und verspottet deine Macht.	<i>and mock your power.</i>

Ian Sabourin: *Dixit Dominus* by G.F. Handel uses the texts from Psalm 110 which are attributed to David, the king of Israel. Psalm 110 is a description of Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, ruling in the midst of their enemies. The Rod represents the gospel which is shared by the Lord of Jerusalem. While there is mood of rejoicing, there is also a seriousness about the Lord ruling in the midst of his enemies, instilling order. Tension is beautifully released by sustained notes preceding lengthy running passages. The text reflects the Lord ruling through rhythmic strength between the cello and the voice, which propels each one forward, creating a sense of might.

Virgam virtutis tuae,	<i>The sceptre of your power,</i>
emitet Dominus ex Sion;	<i>The Lord shall send forth from Zion:</i>
dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.	<i>Rule thou in the midst of your enemies.</i>

Alexandra Carroll: This aria is from Handel's penultimate oratorio, *Theodora*. In this aria, after being told she will be enslaved as a prostitute, Theodora pleads to the heavens to let the angels protect and care for her on her upcoming journey. She fears for her suffering, but brings qualities of hopefulness and courage as a faithful Christian. Theodora gains a sense of power in her chaos by rising above the circumstances and seeing that there is hope in God's angels. Consequently, Theodora dies as an emblem of peace, mercifully suffering for the betterment of her people.

Angels, ever bright and fair, take me to your care.
Speed to your own courts thy flight, clad in robes of virgin white.

Caroline Stanczyk: Handel's *Theodora* was his penultimate oratorio and said to be his favorite. Theodora sings her aria "With Darkness Deep" in the second act. At this point, Theodora has been sentenced to serve as a prostitute in the temple of Venus. Throughout this poignant aria she is questioning how to live and asking the sun for its protection. Ironically, she asks the sun to shield her with its darkness (the shadows that it creates). By doing this, Handel establishes Theodora's character, being one refusing to turn to darkness or evil. Handel therefore sustains order within all the chaos of the oratorio. This aria ultimately represents one of life's repetitive themes: bad things happening to good people.

With darkness deep as is my woe hide me,
ye shades of night, hide me!
Your thickest veil around me throw,
conceal'd from human sight,
Or come thou, Death, thy victim save,
Kindly embosom'd in the grave.

Heidi Duncan: Theodora has been imprisoned after being discovered in private worship and is threatened that she will be sentenced to prostitution. She decides that she would much rather be put to death than to have the consequences that are to come. She convinces herself that God is calling her to heaven and expresses the freedom she will have in the afterlife. Theodora tries to fix her chaos of her circumstance with the idea of order that she is more pleased with the idea of death than her cruel fate. In the midst of the chaos around her, Theodora chooses to be hopeful and stay strong in her faith.

Oh! That I on wings could rise,
Swiftly sailing thro' the skies,
As skims the silver dove.
That I might rest, forever blest,
with harmony and love.

Elias Theocharidis: In contemporary society, violent events have resulted in an understanding of chaos as a norm. Events that normally would cause people shock and disbelief are now understood in society as the reality. In Handel's *Samson*, we find Samson angry, betrayed and alone after being blinded and weakened by his own lover, Delilah, and her people of the Philistine. Samson's aria "Total Eclipse" illustrates his own encounter with chaos through the darkness he experiences in losing his sight. He asks why he must be deprived of the sun, moon, and stars, begging light to shine through to him and restore order. Samson reminds us that this cannot become the default in the face of chaos if our own societal order is to be restored. Perseverance is something our society has in spades. For Samson, this is too difficult to obtain.

Total eclipse!
No sun, no moon!
All dark amidst the blaze of noon!
O glorious light!
No cheering ray to glad my eyes
with welcome day!
Why thus depriv'd Thy prime decree?
Sun, moon and stars are dark to me.

Matthew Li: In a rage aria that encapsulates the idea of chaos, the Pharisee Saul persecutes disciples of Christ simply because of their difference in beliefs to his. The rushing accompaniment is an illustration of the fire that Saul wishes all Christians are torched under. Combined with the declamatory nature of the vocal line, and tonicizations of multiple minor keys, an idea of the Christians' terror towards Saul can clearly be imagined.

Vertilge sie, Herr Zebaoth,	<i>Destroy them, Lord Sabaoth,</i>
wie Stoppeln vor dem Feuer!	<i>like stubble in front of the fire!</i>
Sie wollen nicht erkennen,	<i>They do not want to realize</i>
dass du mit deinem Namen heisest Herr allein,	<i>that Thou are called by thy name,</i>
die Höchste in aller Welt.	<i>Lord alone, the highest in the world.</i>

Alexandra Hetherington: In the sequence of scenes drawn from St. Paulus we see a clear depiction of chaos becoming order, represented by the conversion of Saul. In the previous aria, “Vertilge sie, Herr Zebaoth,” Saul is expressing chaos and fury through his condemnation of Christianity. “Doch der Herr” is musically, and textually, a representation of peace after this surge of rage. The narrator is reminding the Christians that God’s peace is promised to his children, and that order can be found by trusting in Him. Indeed, immediately following this scene is the conversion of Saul. It is through this conversion that we witness chaos becoming order. Both his inner chaos is stilled, and the chaos he inflicted upon others through persecution is brought to an end.

Doch der Herr vergisst der Seinen nicht,	<i>But the Lord does not forget,</i>
Er gedenkt seiner Kinder,	<i>He remembers His children.</i>
Fallt vor ihm nieder, ihr Solzen,	<i>Fall to your knees, you proud ones,</i>
denn der Herr is nahe!	<i>Because the Lord is near!</i>

Alexander Bowie: St. Paul has been blinded and has spent three days in the desert without food or water. He is weak and tired, yet he resilient in his faith in God. In this aria he pleads for God to erase his sins, explaining his desire to be a follower of Christ. At the end of the aria God listens and lifts the scales from Paul’s eyes allowing him to see and freely proclaim his word. Although Saul will face many more challenges as an apostle, his past is forgiven and a new life begun. Chaos manifests itself in Saul’s early life as sin but after his conversion comes order in the form of his faith in God.

Gott sei mir gnädig nach deiner Güte,	<i>God have mercy,</i>
und tilge meine Sünden	<i>and forgive my transgressions</i>
nach deiner grossen Barmherzigkeit.	<i>according to your great mercy</i>
Verwirf mich nicht von deinem Angesicht und	<i>Do not keep me from your presence</i>
nimm deinem heiligen Geist nicht von mir.	<i>Do not take your holy spirit from me.</i>
Ein geängstetes und zerschlagenes Herz	<i>A scared and broken heart</i>
wirst du Gott nicht verachten.	<i>will not despise God.</i>
Denn ich will die Übertreter deine Wege lehren,	<i>Because I want to teach your ways to the transgressors,</i>
dass sich die Sünder zu dir bekehren.	<i>and sinners shall convert to you.</i>
Herr thue meine Lippen auf, dass mein Mund	<i>Lord open my lips, that my mouth</i>
deinen Ruhm verkündige.	<i>may announce your glory.</i>

Lutzen Riedstra: I find the closing line of the recitative interesting especially given that it is the 500th anniversary of the Christian reformation, when Martin Luther posted his grievances with the Pope and the Catholic Church on Hallows evening. The last line roughly translates to “God is not in any man-made building” which reminds me of Luther criticizing the construction of St. Peter’s Cathedral funded by the sale of indulgences. It seems to me that this is one of the sentiments that Luther was protesting against the church, that (the Christian) God isn’t in opulence. Perhaps then, Luther’s treatises were how he tried to make sense and find order in what he thought was the “un-Godly” ways of the Catholic Church at that time.

Ihr Männer, was macht da?	<i>You men, what are you doing?</i>
Wir sind auch sterbliche Menschen gleich wie ihr,	<i>We are also mortals like you,</i>
un predigen euch das Evangelium,	<i>And preach the gospel to you,</i>
dass ihr euch bekehren sollt von diesem falschen	<i>that you should turn away from false ones</i>
zu dem lebendigen Gott,	<i>to the living God,</i>
welcher gemacht hat Himmel und Erde	<i>which has made heaven and earth</i>
und das Meer.	<i>and the sea.</i>
Wie der Prophet spricht:	<i>As the prophet speaks:</i>
All eure Götzen sind Trügerei,	<i>All your idols are deceit,</i>
sind eine Nichts und haben kein Leben:	<i>are nothing and have no life:</i>
sie müssen fallen,	<i>they have to fall,</i>
wenn sie heimgesuchet werden.	<i>in times of trouble, they shall be punished.</i>
Gott wohnt nicht in Tempeln,	<i>God does not live in temples,</i>
mit Menschenhänden gemacht.	<i>made with human hands.</i>

Nicholas Higgs: St. Paul, a recent convert to Christianity, is being called a God sent down from heaven by the Gentiles. His god-like acts have inspired the Gentiles to make bodily sacrifices and spill their blood to please the Gods. Creating order out of chaos by preventing bloodshed and death, St. Paul preaches to the crowd that there is only one God, and defiling the body, or God's temple, will surely anger him. Underneath the vocal line is a steady pulse of arpeggios that help portray St. Paul as a calm man attempting to prevent bodily harm, and to teach the people about his newfound faith.

Wisset ihr nicht, dass ihr Gottes Temple seid?	<i>Do not you know that you are the temple of God?</i>
Und dass der Geist Gottes in euch wohnt?	<i>And that the Spirit of God dwells in you?</i>
Denn der Tempel Gottes ist heilig, der seid ihr!	<i>For the temple of God is holy, that is you!</i>
Aber unser Gott ist im Himmel,	<i>But our God is in heaven,</i>
er schaffet alles was er will!	<i>His will directs all!</i>

Charis Wong: "Meine Seele dürstet nach Gott" and the following recitative "Meine Tränen sind meine Speise" are from Mendelssohn's Psalm 42, a soprano cantata. Mendelssohn uses the continuous 16th notes in the accompaniment of the aria to mirror the anxiety and longing of the psalmist's spirit for his God. The psalmist's chaos is personal, and while in this aria there doesn't seem to be any resolution or hope, the whole cantata moves towards restoring order between David and God.

Meine Seele dürstet nach Gott,	<i>My soul thirsts for God,</i>
nach dem lebendigen Gotte,	<i>for the living God.</i>
Wann werde ich dahin kommen,	<i>When shall I come</i>
dass ich Gottes Angesicht schaue?	<i>and appear before God?</i>
Meine Thränen sind meine Speise Tag und Nacht	<i>My tears have been my food day and night</i>
Weil man täglich zu mir saget	<i>For every day you say to me</i>
Wo ist nun dein Gott?	<i>Where is now thy God?</i>
Wenn ich des inne werde	<i>When I think thereupon</i>
Zo schütte ich mein Herz aus bei mir selbst.	<i>I pour my heart out by myself.</i>

Sacha Smith: Having just been taunted by his contemporaries, the psalmist now takes this moment to ignore their jests. Upon reflection he finds order through what he knows is true: faith in God prevails. This aria gallantly recalls the ecstasy of the past when he was involved in the joyful worship of God. Not only does he go with joy and praise in his heart but with outward expressions of it, proclaiming it to those around him.

Denn ich wollte gern hingehen	<i>For I had gone forth gladly</i>
Mit dem Haufen und mit ihnen	<i>With the people, flowing with them</i>
Wallen zum Hause Gottes,	<i>to the house of God,</i>
Mit Frohlocken und mit Danken	<i>With joy and thanks</i>
Wallen zum Hause Gottes	<i>flowing to the house of God</i>
Unter dem Haufen die da feiern	<i>Among them that celebrate there</i>
Denn ich wollte gern hingehen	<i>For I had gone forth gladly</i>
Und mit ihnen Wallen zum Hause Gottes.	<i>to the house of God.</i>

Tristan Scott: "Dem Druck erliegt die Natur" by Joseph Haydn establishes the sun as the world's main provider of order. We humans have been able to survive and thrive due to its constant presence, while at the very same time suffering under it in numerous circumstances - drought, famine, death and singed landscapes are all elements which remain ever-present on Earth in the sun's wake. Regardless, the sun is the first and foremost barrier from what can be considered true chaos - a planet devoid of life as we know it - and it is therefore worthy of both admiration and fear.

Dem Druck erliegt die Natur.	<i>Nature succumbs to the pressure</i>
Welke Blumen, dürre Wiesen,	<i>Wilted flowers, dry meadows,</i>
trockne Quellen, alles zeigt der Hitze Wut,	<i>dry springs, everything shows the heat rage,</i>
und kraftlos schmachten Mensch und Tier	<i>and powerless humans and animals languish</i>
am Boden hingestreckt.	<i>stretched out on the ground.</i>

Avery Lafrentz: Haydn's score wraps the chaos of nature in the blanket of winter where disorder is mollified and given a rest during the darkest long nights of the season. Haydn gives us order with long legato phrases over the simple delicate rhythms of the violins, almost as if the breath of winter hushes and simplifies the pulse of the realm of the living.

Aus Lapplands Höhlen schreitet her	<i>Out of Lapland's caves approaches now</i>
Der stürmischdüstr're Winter jetzt.	<i>the stormy, gloomy winter.</i>
Vor seimen tritt' er starrt	<i>Before the advancing steps,</i>
in banger Stilled die Natur.	<i>Nature seems frozen in anxious stillness</i>
Licht und Lebensind geschwächt,	<i>Light and life are weakened,</i>
Wärm und Freude sind verschwunden.	<i>Warmth and joy disappear,</i>
Unmutsvollen Tagen folget schwarzer Nächte	<i>Desolate days follow blacker nights</i>
lange Dauer.	<i>of long duration.</i>

Georgia Perdikoulis: This aria reflects the theme of chaos into order through the text and the music. The text of this piece is the asking of God for the forgiveness of our sins. The concept of being forgiven for sins parallels the concept of going from a dark and confusing period into the light and order brought on by the forgiveness of the Lord. The music accompanies this gesture as the melody rises in pitch for the second half, giving a more ethereal quality to the piece symbolizing the serenity and order that God can bring.

Dignare Domine, die isto sine peccato nos custodire	<i>Vouchsafe, O Lord keep us this day without sin</i>
Miserere nostri, Domini,	<i>Have mercy, O lord, upon us,</i>
Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos,	<i>Just as we have trusted in Thee.</i>
quemadmodum, speravimus in te.	<i>In thee O Lord, I have trusted</i>
In te, Domine, speravi: non confundar, in aeternum.	<i>May I not be confounded through eternity.</i>

Margarete von Vaigt: Verdi's Messa da Requiem, specifically, Requiem Aeterna gives the deceased souls reprieve from the tortures of the world as they journey to eternal light. Judgement is brought to stillness as the glimmer of hope consoles humanity's sombreness with salvation. The portrayal of fear and despair is most poignant as order and peace emerge from chaos.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,	<i>Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord,</i>
et lux perpetua luceat eis.	<i>And let perpetual light shine upon them.</i>

Today's concert represents the combined efforts of many.

We are grateful for the input of voice teachers and coaches who have taken the time to support the singers in their preparation, sharing their expertise and insight.

Many thanks to Elias Theocharidis for his dedicated work in helping prepare the program.

My class and I would like to thank Tracy Wong for her positive and productive rehearsals, and her unwavering guidance in performance.

A special thank you from all of us to our generous and diligent class pianist, Miguel Brito, whose efforts and skill are very much appreciated.

-- Mia Bach

Upcoming Performances:

Faculty Artists Ensemble

Nov 20 | 7:30 pm | Walter Hall

German Lieder

Nov 21 | 12:10 pm | Walter Hall

Wednesday Evening Performances

Nov 22 | 6-8 pm | Geiger-Torel Room

Mozart's Don Giovanni

Nov 23-Nov 25 | 7:30 pm | MacMillan Theatre

Nov 26 | 2:30 pm | MacMillan Theatre

Alumna Alexandra Smither in Conversation

Nov 28 | 12:10 pm | Walter Hall

